

County Agent Standards

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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COUNTY AGENT STANDARDS*

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The following outline has been developed to meet a demand from county agricultural agents and supervisors for certain standards which can be used by them for measuring progress in county agent work in a given county from one year to the next. It is not a complete yardstick for measuring progress. It is primarily an inventory intended to serve as a basis for systematic discussion or study of some of the essentials for good county agent work. It is suggested that each State make any necessary changes in standards and weights to adapt the outline to districts or groups of counties having similar conditions. In making such a revision it is desirable to get suggestions from a committee of the county agents best qualified to give this help, or from the most successful individual agents, since these standards can thereby be better adapted for the use of all county agents.

The weights and final score which an agent gets out of a possible 1,000 points are of minor importance. The main object is to stimulate a discussion regarding which are the best units for measuring results and which are the most important items of equipment, means or methods, for success in county agent work. The county agent should be given full credit for any item which does not apply to his county, or which the supervisor can not justify as important in the county or at the time of analysis.

There necessarily will be differences of opinion with reference to the standards. The weight indicated for each item is the maximum for that item. The standards suggested in this outline are conservative, based upon average conditions, with the understanding that supervisors and agents will include only such units as meet a high standard of quality. Result demonstrations given credit under section one, for example, should include only demonstrations of results set up to furnish local proof that the recommended practice is desirable or superior to some other practice, crop variety, and the like. In order to be worth counting, the result demonstration should be so set up as to furnish proof either for observation at a field meeting or in the form of convincing records of results.

*A revision of Extension Service Circular 17, issued in July, 1926, and Extension Service Circular 66, issued in January, 1928, both entitled "County Agent Standards."

DISTRIBUTION: A copy of this circular has been sent to each State extension director, county agent leader, State agricultural-college library, and experiment-station library.

The term "method demonstrations" refers to meetings where a method such as poultry culling or spraying is demonstrated by the agent, specialist, or local leader who goes through the entire operation just as the people are to do it at home. A poultry-house building demonstration, for example, can be given only by actually building a poultry house. Taking a poultry-house model apart and putting it together again at a meeting, or showing some blue prints, is only an illustrated talk.

Persons credited with being local leaders in extension work must have followers. Such persons must have done more than conduct a result demonstration on their own farms. They must have done work which would otherwise have had to be done by the county extension agent, such as taking charge of a junior club, giving a method demonstration, arranging for meetings, tours, and the like.

The term "practices adopted" refers to something done for the first time as a result of extension work. County agent supervisors will be glad to help agents interpret other terms and to furnish information regarding how best to set up convincing demonstrations, programs or plans of work, calendars of work, and filing systems, based upon the best methods used in their own and other States.

The material in sections V and VI should be compiled and analysed with the farm-management or agricultural economics specialist when such assistance is available. More important questions or questions more applicable to certain counties may be substituted.

After the supervisor and the agent have recorded the weights for the year's analysis, it is suggested that they agree upon and check the items in the outline on which the agent expects to make a special effort to raise his score in the next year's analysis. If preferable this outline can be used as a check sheet without using the weights.

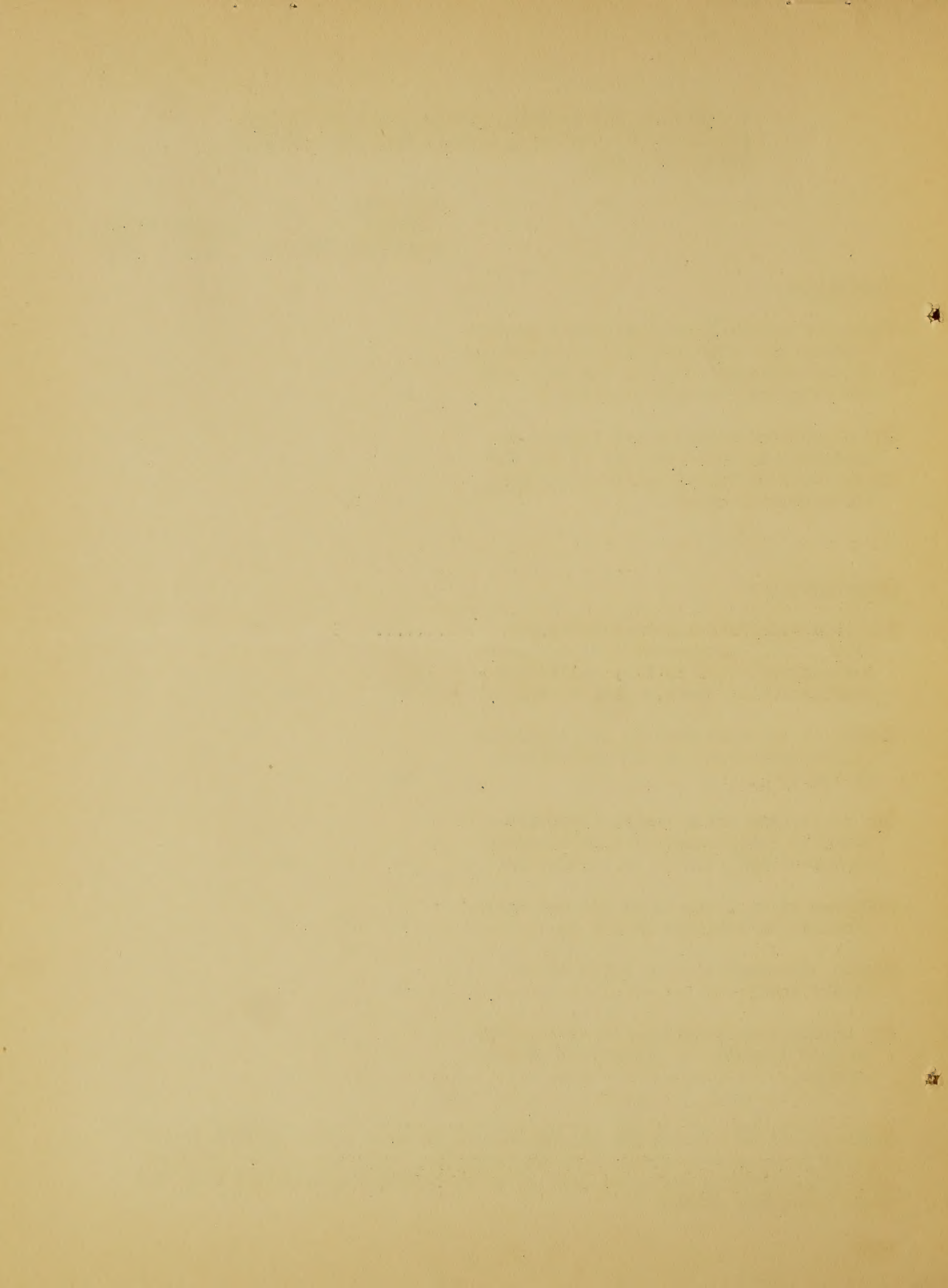
Summary of Points

	<u>Standard</u> <u>weights</u>	<u>Summary of</u> <u>weights 193</u>	<u>Summary of</u> <u>weights 193</u>
I. Extension results, means, and methods...	450		
II. Office records, reports, displays, and equipment.....	100		
III. Classified mailing lists and lists of cooperators.....	50		
IV. Programs and plans of work.....	50		
V. Reference information and material....	150		
VI. Analysis of farm production and marketing situation....	200		
Total points.....	1000		

I. Results and Methods - Based upon Agent's Last
Annual Report Comparing Agent's Work with State
Standards (450)

	<u>Suggested State standards</u>	<u>Weights</u>	<u>Points 193</u>	<u>Points 193</u>
<u>Leadership.</u>				
Number of active local and county project leaders, who actually lead, cooperating in agriculture, including 4-H club leaders (1 point for each 2 leaders).....	80	40		
Number of such active local leaders co-operating in home projects (1 for 2)*.. (Allow full credit if county has a home demonstration agent.)	20	10		
<u>Demonstrations.</u>				
Result demonstrations in agriculture, which really demonstrated by furnishing local proof, conducted by adults and completed with records (1 for each)....	48	48		
Number of 4-H club members who conducted result demonstrations in agriculture (1 for 2).....	20	10		
Two convincing adult result demonstrations in agriculture in each township or community. Locate on outline map...	--	16		
Meetings at or tours to result demonstrations in agriculture (2 for 1).....	10	20		
Method demonstrations in agriculture (1 for each).....	32	32		
Two method demonstrations in agriculture in each township or community. Locate on map.....	--	16		

*Less weight is allowed for accomplishment in home economics than in agriculture because most of the home demonstration work in counties without home demonstration agents is done by home-economics specialists from the State extension office.



	State standards	Weights	Points 193	Points 193
Average attendance at all demonstration meetings in agriculture (1 for each 2 persons)	20	20		
At least one outstanding piece of work, other than demonstrations in each township or community, which gained a considerable amount of favorable comment for extension work, such as a successful 4-H club, a tour, achieve- ment day, or having a large enthusiastic membership in a successful cow-testing asso- ciation concentrated in the community. Check on map.....	--	16		
<u>4-H Club Work.</u>				
4-H club members completing year's project work and furnishing report (1 for 3).....	150	50		
Per cent of club members completing (1 for 6 per cent).....	90	15		
Public demonstrations by 4-H club demonstra- tion team or teams (2 for each).....	5	10		
Per cent of rural children of club age en- rolled in club work (1 for each per cent)*	10	10		
<u>Meetings and Other Means.</u>				
County leader training or project committee meetings in agriculture and 4-H club work (5 for each).....	4	20		
Number of women enrolled in home project work in non-home demonstration agent county (1 for 20).....	200	10		
County, township, or community tours, or achievement days used during the past year in agriculture and home economics (1 for 2)...	10	20		
"One-idea" educational project exhibits pre- pared and displayed at fairs or in show windows (4 for 1).....	3	12		

*Get actual figures from the county superintendent of schools or assume
that there is an average of a boy or girl of club age on every farm.

	<u>State standards</u>	<u>Weights</u>	<u>Points 193</u>	<u>Points 193</u>
Practices adopted for first time in agriculture, based on names and other definite records in annual report (1 for 10) *.....	400	40		
Different farms visited by county agricultural agent (1 for 30).....	300	10		
Office and telephone calls (1 for 300).....	3000	10		
Different circular letters prepared (8 for 10)..	50	5		
Total meetings participated in by county agri- cultural agent (1 for each 10).....	100	10		

II. Office Records, Reports, Displays and Equipment (100)

	<u>Weights</u>	<u>Points 193</u>	<u>Points 193</u>
Daily record sheet (1), record slips or cards (1), and project record sheet or card used (1).....	3		
Small outline county maps showing communities carrying on extension work and community boundaries, available for use in making project records and reports.....	2		
Map or maps of county showing graphically major accomplishments in extension work during the past year.....	10		
Inventory of office equipment belonging to county extension organization or county extension office under headings, quantity, article, and cost.....	2		

* The names can often be obtained from business firms handling supplies
such as feed, lime spray outfits, or lumber for portable hog houses.

	<u>Weights</u>	<u>Points</u> 193	<u>Points</u> 193
Practical system of filing so that any important material can be found in less than one minute: Correspondence (2); reference material, including statistical and narrative reports of extension work in county since work was started, in one folder or available for convenient reference (4); and bulletins (9).....	15		
File of a few good photographs relating to extension work of county, suitable for use in making cuts for press articles and for annual reports.....	2		
Project folders of material for report making.....	3		
File cleared annually of dead material.....	3		
Narrative report - completeness of data (3), convincing style (4), maps (2), photographs (1).	10		
Agent using newspaper style in narrative report and press articles.....	4		
Brief summary of outstanding accomplishments of extension work in county by projects and years during the past 5 or 10 years, or since work was started. Include only major projects or activities. Show number of cooperators, demonstrators, people adopting practices, club members completing, and other facts indicating progress....	14		
Annual report summary for the past year and next year's program of work printed on single card or in 4-page circular for general distribution..	5		
Office display of insect, disease, or weed pests; kinds of feeds, limestone, or fertilizers.....	2		
Graph or other convincing way of showing agricultural trends, losses, or conditions for one project.....	3		
Bulletin display rack.....	3		
Suitable pictures on wall of groups of people cooperating in county extension work; also of animals, products, and so forth, involved in extension work.....	2		

	<u>Weights</u>	<u>Points</u> <u>193</u>	<u>Points</u> <u>193</u>
Office display material, walls and so forth, free from nonessentials.....	5		
Office equipment..... (1 point for each of 12 of the following items):	12		
Telephone.			
Vertical filing case.			
Motion-picture slide or film-strip projector.			
Mimeograph.			
Cloth blackboard.			
Camera.			
Office desk.			
Typewriter desk for clerk.			
Worktable.			
Four to six office chairs.			
Transfer cases for records and the like.			
Four or more pieces of professional equipment, such as soil tester for acidity, transit, soil auger, pruning shears, pruning saw, tester to show availability of plant food.			

III. Classified Mailing Lists and Lists of Cooperators (50)

Selected list in files of the 50 most influential farmers of the county who are most willing and able to help advance agricultural extension work, including 4-H club work. A carefully selected list of 50 is better than a longer list hurriedly made up.....	5
Selected list in files of the 50 most in- fluential women in the county who are most able and willing to encourage and help to advance home demonstration work, including 4-H club work.....	2

	<u>Weights</u>	<u>Points</u> <u>193</u>	<u>Points</u> <u>193</u>
Selected list in files of the 25 most influential business and professional men who are most willing and able to help advance extension work in the county.....	3		
List of county and community extension committees or advisory council, including project or local leaders, arranged by communities or townships.....	2		
List of all demonstrators, project or local leaders, cooperators, and others most interested in promoting each project, arranged by projects. These project lists should be complete enough to include the leading farmers under each project, such as hog raisers, dairymen, and poultry men, to facilitate the use of circular letters to supplement the use of the press in reaching the most progressive farmers. The county agent and supervisor, after considering the number of dairymen in the county, might agree that the list of dairymen should be 100, poultry men 50, and so forth. These lists should be kept to a reasonable minimum.....	21		
List of 80 per cent of all farmers of county checked within two years for correct addresses.....	2		
List of members of boys' and girls' 4-H clubs.....	2		
Members of county extension association.....	2		
Officers of other farmers' organizations of the county, such as the grange, farm bureau, and farmers' union.....	2		
Breeders of purebred livestock by breeds and officers of breed associations.....	2		
Pure-seed growers of county.....	2		
Officers of each cooperative marketing association, creamery, and so forth, in county.....	3		

	<u>Points</u>	<u>Points</u>
<u>Weights</u>	<u>193</u>	<u>193</u>

List in files of officers of county bankers' association and commercial clubs; also their agricultural committee members..... 2

IV. Programs and Plans of Work (50)

Before making up programs and plans of work, it is desirable that the agent prepare reference material and make analysis of the agricultural problems of the county, suggested in sections V and VI of this outline.

	<u>Points</u>	<u>Points</u>
<u>Weights</u>	<u>193</u>	<u>193</u>

Seven community or township programs of work with definite goals developed with committees of farm people for present or coming year (2 for each)..... 14

Chart showing county program of work by projects and townships, with goals for present or coming year..... 3

County plan-of-work summary chart for present or coming year, using the following items at left of page and a 3-inch column for each of the three major projects or activities..... 12

Name of project.

Situation, including number of people now following practices involved.

Goals - number of farmers to adopt practice for first time during year, and other numerical goals.

Number of communities or townships involved.

Number of project or local leaders to be used.

Number of result demonstrations contemplated.

Purpose of demonstrations or local proof to be established through demonstrations.

Number of meetings to be held at result demonstrations.

	<u>Points</u>	<u>Points</u>
<u>Weights</u>	<u>193</u>	<u>193</u>

Number of method demonstrations con-
templated.
Number of tours to be used.
Number of other meetings relating to
project.
Number of different circular letters
to be prepared.
Number of news articles to be prepared.
Number of one-idea educational exhibits.
Contests planned.
Visual aids, such as film strips to be
prepared.
Surveys to be conducted.
List other methods.

Days of agent's time to be used.
Days of specialist's time.
Methods to be used for determining
number of people adopting practices
or otherwise measuring results.

Calendar of work, showing monthly or seasonal
distribution of work by projects for
present or next year..... 4

One project planned in detail and conducted
on an intensive or campaign basis, using
some of the methods listed below.

Check and allow point for each extension
means used effectively in this project..... 17

Achievement days.	Letters - circular.
Calendars.	Meetings.
Committees.	Motion pictures.
Debates.	Posters and poster contests.
Demonstration meetings.	Press articles.
Demonstration of method.	Score cards.
Demonstration of result.	Slides or film strips.
Demonstration teams.	Tours.
Essay or reason why contest.	Visits to farms.
Exhibits.	Window displays.

List additional means and agencies used here.

V. Reference Information and Material (150)

Farm Population, Farm and Crop Acreage in County (5)*

(An example of how this material was compiled for one county is given in a supplement to this circular - Extension mim. No. 4104)

	<u>1930</u>	<u>1925</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1910</u>
Total number of farms				
Farms operated by owners				
Farms operated by tenants				
Per cent of tenants				
Average acres per farm				
Average acres of improved land per farm		X**		
Acreage of all crops harvested, 1929				
Pasture land per farm, total				
Acres plowable or improved pasture land per farm				
Nonplowable pasture land excluding woodland				X
Woodland pasture				X
Other farm land (waste and woodland not pastured and other farm land)			X	X
Number of school districts in county	X		X	X

*Place weights for year following the weights given in parenthesis.

**X is used to show that information is not available or that it was not considered essential to include it.

Average Number of Acres per Farm, Principal Crops (5)

	<u>1929</u>	<u>1924</u>	<u>1919</u>	<u>1909</u>
Corn harvested for grain				
Corn hogged off			X	X
Corn cut for silage				X
Corn cut for fodder				X
Oats threshed or unthreshed				
Potatoes				
Hay crops, all - average per farm of total				
Alfalfa				
Clovers				
Clover and timothy mixed				
Wild grasses				
Average tons of hay per farm, all kinds				
Acres of legume hay and pasture per farm, including timothy and clover mixed				X

County Average Yield Per Acre (5)

	<u>Census</u>	<u>Census</u>	<u>Census</u>	<u>Crop estimates</u>	<u>Crop estimates</u>
	<u>1929</u>	<u>1924</u>	<u>1919</u>	<u>1921-1925</u>	<u>1916-1920</u>
Corn (bushel)					
Oats					
Wheat					
Potatoes					

Average Yield Reported by Best Growers from Farm Management

Records and Other Sources

<u>Year:</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1929</u>	<u>1928</u>	<u>1927</u>	<u>1926</u>
Corn	.				
Oats					
Wheat					
Potatoes					

Average Number of Head Principal Kinds of Livestock per Farm (4)

	<u>January</u> 1930	<u>January</u> 1925	<u>January</u> 1920	<u>April</u> 1910
Total of all cattle				
Cows 2 years old and over, beef and dairy				
Swine, all ages *				
Chickens				
Horses and mules, 2 years old and over				

* Census figures relating to hogs and young stock should be used with caution, due to changes in dates when census figures were taken for the different periods.

Livestock Production (10)

Average number of cows milked per farm, 1930.

Average milk produced per cow (pounds),* 1930.

Average pounds of milk produced per cow in five of best herds in county
or in herd-improvement association last year.

Average number of eggs produced per hen,* 1930.

Average number of eggs produced per hen in five of
best flocks in county last year.

Average age at which hogs in county are made to weigh 225 pounds.

Same in herds of most successful hog raisers in county.

Number of pigs raised per brood sow by average farmer
in county last year.

Number of pigs raised per brood sow in hog-lot sanitation
demonstrations.

Marketing and Value of Farm Products (8)

	<u>1929</u>	<u>1924</u>	<u>1919</u>	<u>1909</u>
Average value per farm of all crops raised, reported in census				
Average value per farm of all livestock on farms, January 1, 1930				
Average value of dairy products produced per farm				
Value of eggs produced and chickens raised				

*Usually underestimated in census figures.

	<u>1929</u>	<u>1924</u>	<u>1919</u>	<u>1909</u>
Value of farm products sold cooperatively			X	X
Value of farm supplies purchased co-operatively			X	X
Index of prices of farm products*				
Relative purchasing power of farm products**				
General commodity price index*				X

Average Farm Expenditures per Farm (1)

	<u>1929</u>	<u>1924</u>	<u>1919</u>	<u>1909</u>
Labor (money wages only)				
Feed				
Fertilizers				

Average Value of Farm Property and Mortgage Debt (5)

	<u>1929</u>	<u>1925</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1910</u>
Total value of all farm property				
Value per farm of all farm property				
Land and buildings				
All livestock				
Implements and machinery				

*Five-year average before war, 1910-1914, represents 100.

**Ratio of price of what farmer sells to the price of things farmer buys, the years 1910-1914 being considered normal or equal to 100.

	<u>1929</u>	<u>1925</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1910</u>
Horses				
Value of land and buildings per acre*				
Per cent of farms operated by owners reporting mortgage debt				
Average mortgage debt per mortgaged farm				
Ratio of mortgage debt to value of land and buildings	%	%	%	%

Other Facts

(List most of the following material on separate sheets.)

	<u>Weights</u>	<u>Points</u> <u>193</u>	<u>Points</u> <u>193</u>
25 farm records taken and returned in county during past year. Give summary.....	25		
25 farm-account records kept and summarized. Give summary.....	25		
List in order of economic importance the 10 principal commodities - crops and kinds of livestock or livestock products and 5-year average value per farm of each.....	5		
List by months the 5-year average farm price of above commodities. Indicate source of prices used.....	15		

Commod- ity	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.

*These figures would be more comparable if divided by the general commodity index.

	<u>Weights</u>	<u>Points</u> <u>193</u>	<u>Points</u> <u>193</u>
List freight rates per 100 pounds of principal kinds of livestock and per bushel of principal crops shipped out to the one or two important markets to which farm products of county are most commonly shipped.....	5		
List varieties best adapted to county for each of five principal kinds of field crops, five fruits, and five vegetables raised in county....	5		
List most important plant disease or insect pest, or both, affecting these crops; also, list in order of economic importance the five principal diseases affecting livestock of county. Give estimate of loss in county and per farm from each.....	15		
List two principal industries in the county other than farming - number of men employed in each and annual value of output of these industries.....	5		
Climate.....	1		
Average date of last killing frost in spring			
Average date of first killing frost in fall			
Average annual precipitation			

Taxation (5)

Total assessed valuation of all taxable property in county in 1930

Total general taxes paid by farm property	%	\$
---	---	----

Total general taxes paid by cities and villages	%	\$
---	---	----

Tax cost for salary and expenses of county agricultural agent
from county funds:

- (1) Average per farm, based on proportion paid by rural property.
- (2) Average cost per acre, based on proportion paid by rural property.
- (3) Average per \$100 of total general taxes collected.

Same for home demonstration agent if one is employed in county.

Reference Books and Maps (1)

Ten standard subject-matter reference books, and two good books on salesmanship or teaching methods available in agent's office.

Soil, R. F. D., and geological-survey maps of county and United States census reports for 1910, 1920, 1925, and 1930, available in office for reference; also United States Department of Agriculture and State department of agriculture yearbooks for the last five years.

VI. Analysis of Farm Production and Marketing Situation (20C)

The reference material suggested on the preceding pages, the county agent's office records, and the information gathered by his contact with the farmers and business men of the county should serve as the basis for the following analysis of some of the farm production and marketing problems of the county. The material recorded will be of value to him, to future agents, and to the representatives of the State extension office, who will wish to use it for reference if it is carefully prepared. These questions are a challenge not only to the agent's background of information, but also to his judgment. It is not expected that the county agent will have the economic information about his county suggested in this outline ready for the first analysis, but credit can be added for this as soon as completed. Relatively heavy weights are given for preparing the following outline, because it is assumed that a considerable amount of effort and time will be required in preparing the detailed records upon which the following conclusions can be based:

	<u>Weights</u>	<u>Points</u> <u>193</u>	<u>Points</u> <u>193</u>
List 10 of the most important conclusions that can be reached, based upon the reference material listed in preceding section.....	10		
List 10 recommendations for increasing labor income on farms of county, based on recent farm-management records in county. Indicate farm-management facts used as basis for each conclusion.....	10		
List average cost of production per acre of principal crops, 5-year average price, and the average number of bushels or tons per acre which are necessary to pay the cost of production. In the same table show the net profit which can be expected per acre, based on farm-account and cost-of-production studies....	30		
List 3 most profitable practices for 5 crops and 5 kinds of livestock which will give the maximum increase in net profit per acre or animal unit. This can be determined best by a careful study of the experiences of the most successful farmers in the county, based on farm records.....	20		
In what kinds of farm crops, if any, should acreage be reduced because of unprofitableness during last five years, and present trends? Give similar information regarding livestock. Give evidence for your conclusions.....	10		

	<u>Weights</u>	<u>Points</u> <u>193</u>	<u>Points</u> <u>193</u>
List kinds of livestock or livestock products which should be produced in county more extensively to meet local demands. List cash or feed crops which should be produced more extensively to meet local demands or for use on farms. Which of these products shipped in from outside could farmers produce profitably for local market. Give statistical evidence here to show correctness of your conclusions....	25		
In which crops and kinds of livestock should production be encouraged because of special adaptability or profitableness in the next 5-year period, considering market demands and competition with other areas producing the same products? Give reasons. Conclusions should be reached only after a careful analysis of facts, using the best information and counsel available in the State.....	25		
List farm-management system that might be generally adopted in county or the combination of crops and livestock which is proving most profitable for five of the most successful farmers in the county, based upon labor income or per cent returned on investment.....	10		
List kinds of fruits and vegetables that are now being shipped in most extensively which can be raised profitably as special crops to supply a limited local demand within county or for home consumption. Give statistical evidence.....	10		

	<u>Points</u>	<u>Points</u>
<u>Weights</u>	<u>193</u>	<u>193</u>

In which of these vegetable and fruit crops would commercial production be likely to fit into the farm organization systems and give larger net farm income to the producers? Give statistical evidence.....

5

Prepare analysis chart, preferably with a county committee, of problems of county, using following outline.....

45

Chief sources of income - principal crops and kinds of livestock	Chief factors limiting profit, difficulties, or problems	Facts making people conscious of losses or seriousness of problem	Solution or remedy proposed considering its suitability	Gain or satisfaction to be had by adopting remedy
--	--	---	---	---



